

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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14

ACTION DPW-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 IO-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 RSR-01 /092 W

----- 002354

R 211032 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 536

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 6937

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS VS

SUBJ: STATUS OF TPJMC TALKS: MILITARY POWS AND CIVILIAN DETAINEES

1. AT APRIL 20 MEETING OF TPJMC CHIEFS OF DELEGATION, PRG ADDED 209 MORE TO PREVIOUS LIST OF 428 CIVILIAN DETAINEES, BRINGING TOTAL OFFERED FOR RELEASE TO 637. PRG PROPOSED THAT THEIR 637 BE RELEASED SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE 5,081 ON THE GVN LIST, BEGINNING APR 26. DISCUSSION WAS INCONCLUSIVE, WITH GVN INSISTING ON PRIOR AGREEMENT ON POW RELEASES. ALLEGING THE GVN HAD REJECTED THEIR OFFER, PRG DELEGATION CALLED OUT STORY TO THE PRESS IN APPARENT ATTEMPT TO PUT PRESSURE ON GVN TO MAKE THE EXCHANGE WITHIN THE 90 DAY NEGOTIATING PERIOD MENTIONED IN THE PARIS AGREEMENT.

2. GVN DELEGATION WAS OBVIOUSLY UNIMPRESSED BY THE ADDITION OF THE 209, NOTING IN MEETING THAT, WHILE THE PRG HAS LITTLE BY LITTLE BY LITTLE INCREASED THE NUMBER OF CIVILIANS IT ADMITS HOLDING, THE 637 FIGURE IS STILL UNACCEPTABLY LOW COMPARED TO THE MORE THAN 67,000 CIVILIANS THE GVN LISTS AS ABDUCTED SINCE 1954. THE FACT THAT THE PRG HAS INCREASED ITS OFFER FROM THE ORIGINAL 140 TO 637 UNDOUBTEDLY ENCOURAGES THE GVN TO BELIEVE THAT THEIR HARD LINE HAS BEEN A CORRECT NEGOTIATING TACTIC AND THAT MORE CIVILIANS WILL BE RELEASED BY THE PRG IF THEY HOLD FAST. HOWEVER, WE ESTIMATE THAT IT IS PROBABLE THAT THE GVN MAY WELL PROPOSE TO RELEASE A PORTION OF THE 5,081 IN EXCHANGE FOR THE 637 BEFORE X PLUS 90.

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3. WITH GVN IN CHAIR FOR NEXT WEEK' S MEETINGS, EMPHASIS APPEARS
LIKELY TO BE PLACED ON MILITARY POWS STILL DETAINED. RVN DEL IS
PORTRAYING THIS AS SEPARATE MATTER OF HIGHER PRIORITY SINCE 60- DAY
PERIOD HAS ALREADY ELAPSED AND 90- DAY HEADLINE ON CIVILIAN PRISONERS
IS NOT BINDING ON TWO PARTIES. GVN WILL CONTINUE TO INSIST THAT
PRG IMMEDIATELY AND UNCONDITIONALLY RELEASE 410 POWS PREVIOUSLY
OFFERED FOR RELEASE NEAR PLEIKU WITHOUT REFERENCE TO ANY OTHER
ISSUE.
PRG IN APRIL 20 MEETING AGAIN DEMANDED SIMULTANEOUS RELEASE OF 410
AND RETURN TO PRG OF 241 COMMUNIST POWS WHO HAVE INDICATED THEIR
DESIRE

TO STAY IN RVN. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT GVN HAS NO INTENTION OF
ACCEPTING THIS LINKAGE AND IN APRIL 24 MEETING WILL PROPOSE THAT
ICCS AND JMC JOINTLY CHECK BONA FIDES OF 241 BY CONDUCTING INDIVIDUAL
INTERVIEWS, WITH PRESS PRESENCE IF PRG DESIRES.
BUNKER

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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